Trump transition team discussing registry of Muslims

Our reporter
19 November 2016

In the wake of a television appearance in which a Trump campaign activist said that a registry of Muslim visitors to the United States could be justified under the "precedent" set by the mass internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II, a leader of the Trump transition team has revealed that a formal proposal for such a registry is under discussion.

Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach, co-leader of the transition team's group working on immigration, said that the advisory panel was considering presenting Trump with a formal proposal for a national registry of immigrants and visitors from predominantly Muslim countries. Kobach designed a similar program after the 9/11 attacks while he was an official in the Bush administration's Department of Justice.

The National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS) designated numerous countries as "higher risk" and required visitors from these countries to be fingerprinted, interrogated and, in some cases, report to the authorities on a regular basis. The program was suspended in 2011 without having identified a single terrorist, although a total of 94,000 people were subject to it.

The Muslim registry plan came to widespread attention after a spokesman for a pro-Trump Political Action Committee told Fox News Wednesday that the incoming Trump administration could use the Japanese internment program as a precedent, because it had been upheld by the US Supreme Court in its notorious *Korematsu* decision, which has never been overturned.

In an interview with Fox News host Megyn Kelly, Carl Higbie, a former Navy SEAL and spokesman for the Great America PAC said that the plan to register all Muslim visitors to the United States was legal and would "hold constitutional muster."

"We've done it with Iran back awhile ago. We did it during World War II with the Japanese," he said.

Kelly seemed shocked by the proposal and remarked, "Come on, you're not proposing we go back to the days of internment camps, I hope."

Higbie continued, "I'm not proposing that at all. But I'm just saying there is precedent for it." He added that some Muslim visitors were "doing harm. So we would like to keep tabs on it until we can figure out what's going on."

In response to further questions, Higbie declared that visitors were not protected under the US Constitution and therefore could be subjected to treatment that would be unconstitutional and undemocratic for US citizens.

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